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EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM GIVEN GREEN LIGHT FOR 1973-74

MISSOULA--

University of Montana President Robert T. Pantzer has announced a one-year continuation of the experimental program in environmental studies at UM initiated in the fall of 1971.

Pantzer, accepting the recommendation of Academic Vice President Richard G. Landini, said the program had been favorably evaluated at some length by faculty, students and administrators.

"The program has been modified in goals and scope--it will be conducted fall and spring quarters, rather than year around," Pantzer said.

Pantzer also listed changes in faculty involvement, saying the program was very demanding for successive-year faculty participation; took faculty away from research and scholarship for long periods, and due to the intensive nature of the program, left little time or opportunity to departmental matters.

The program, originally funded by part of a \$100,000 Ford Foundation grant to the UM College of Arts and Sciences, will be undertaken by established UM departments as part of their regular instructional offerings.

For the last two years the program was offered under the title of Round River, taken from a chapter of A Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold, which deals with the cyclic aspects of nature and man's place in those cycles.

The program was established to reverse the trend of undergraduate specialization to a more generalized nature. Several important differences characterize the experimental nature of the program, one being that the fundamental process of acquiring a college education does not rely strictly upon the familiar campus setting. The first 15 days of class in 1972 were held at the UMBiological Station at Yellow Bay on Flathead Lake. Field trips and small study group meetings also are featured.

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"Next year's program will likely develop stronger relationships with the regular curriculum, while at the same time maintaining its distinction as an innovative program," Landini said.

In approving the program's third year of study and experimentation, Pantzer stated, "In a period of severe budget limitations it becomes very difficult to justify experimental programs. Our total faculty has already been considerably reduced for next year, even though our student enrollment has not declined significantly.

"But even during a 'budget crunch' we cannot let our curriculum grow stale. We've got to continue to test new ideas, new techniques, new approaches to avoid curricular atrophy. We may not be able to be as innovative as some comparable universities, but we've got to do the best we can," the UM president said.

"The real test in the future," Landini said, "is how we can continue to enliven and strengthen the curriculum through sound innovation, trial and examination, while at the same time maintaining the traditional and well established strengths in our total program."

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